

urban landscape



Left to right: Vancouver Playhouse artistic director Glynis Leyshon, Vancouver International Wine Festival executive director Harry Hertscheg, Wine Festival chair Sue Adams and gala chair Nancy Burke.



Italian trade commissioner Antonio Lucarelli, Italian winemaker Barbara Tamburini and consul general of Italy Uberto Vanni D'Archirafi get their wine on.



Auctioneer Barry Scott fetched \$14,000 for winemaker David Bate's one-off, 2006 Leopard Frog Vineyards 18-litre bottle of Tribe, at the Bacchanalia Gala live auction.



Hotel Vancouver's regional vice-president Mark Andrew and his wife Kristi tasted much fine wine and food at the Bacchanalia Gala Dinner and Auction.



YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE some people who may appear to be a little hung over this week. About 25,000 consumers and trade professionals attended the 30th annual Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival. The preminent wine event in the city featured a plethora of wine tastings, winemaker dinners, red carpet galas,

culinary competitions and educational seminars. This year's regional spotlight was on Italy and Italian wines, with the global focus on sparkling wines. Approximately 1,600 wines were poured at the 60-plus events that took place throughout the city—including 21 Italian-themed events and 12 events exclusive to trade servers and buyers—during the weeklong homage to the grape. The festival kicked off at Earls Restaurant with Ciao Italia—a food and wine pairing affair, featuring the wines of Piero Antinori—and closed with the Wine Awards at the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre. At the heart of the festival was the Grand Tasting Room, home to 176 wineries from 16 countries, serving 701 different wines, and the festival's signature fundraiser, the black-tie Bacchanalia Gala held at Hotel Vancouver.

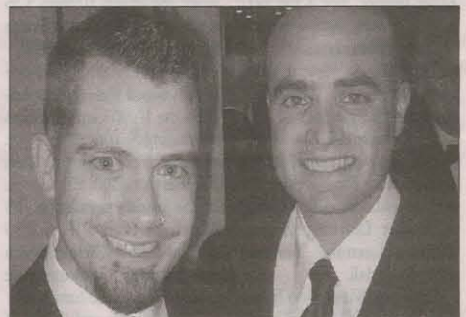
The crown jewel of the festival, the Bacchanalia Gala dinner and auction, fronted by gala chair Nancy Burke, raised a record-breaking \$560,000 for Glynis Leyshon's Vancouver Playhouse Theatre Company. Academy Award-winning actor and Old Vic artistic director Kevin Spacey kicked off the stellar evening via video with opening remarks and by encouraging guests to bid high and bid often, a challenge to which the well-to-do crowd responded. The live auction portion of the evening raised nearly \$300,000 with a bottle of 1982 Chateau Petrus fetching the evening's highest bid by topping out at a remarkable \$46,000. Burke's husband, Goldcorp head honcho Ian Telfer, picked up the wine only to return it to his mining friend Frank Guistra who originally donated the prized bottle. Other notable bids included a dozen bottles of 1982 Chateau Mouton Rothschild Cru Pauillac going for \$37,500; an Andre St. Jacques Bearfoot Bistro Champagne dinner for 10 garnered \$37,000; a Rob Feenie dinner for eight got \$16,500; and David Bate's one-off, 2006 Leopard Frog Vineyards 18-litre bottle of Tribe wine, added another \$14,000 to the event's final tally.

CBC Radio One *The Early Edition* host Rick Cluff and yours truly hosted the Wine Awards at week's end held at the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre in the Parkview Terrace Ballroom. Presided by Wine Festival executive director Harry Hertscheg, Italian trade commissioner Antonio Lucarelli and consul general of Italy Uberto Vanni D'Archirafi, the coveted industry awards were presented at the sold-out luncheon. Food writer Jamie Maw presented Blue Water Café, Sooke Harbour House and West Restaurant with Platinum honours for Best Wine List. Christine Coletta of Coletta Consultants picked up the Spirited Industry Professional Award for her 25 years of service in the wine biz and Boneta's Restaurant's Neil Ingram received Sommelier of the Year Award.

Have an event, opening or just plain gossip you'd like to share or something cool, hot or trendy you'd like to show off? Email me at yorflie@hotmail.com Fred's weekly funcast "Stepping Out" can be heard every Monday morning on CBC Radio One's *The Early Edition* AM690.



Some of Italy's finest artisanal producers of classic method spumante and Amarone wines, Italian winemakers Teresa Rinaldi and Riccardo Savini of Villa Rinaldi attend the Bacchanalia Gala.



Farmstead Wine's Anthony Nicalo (right) congratulates Salt Tasting Room's Kurtis Kolt for the restaurant's Best Wine List honour.



CBC Radio's Rick Cluff (left) and food and wine writer Jamie Maw presented Coletta Consultants' Christine Coletta with the Spirited Industry Professional Award at the Wine Festival Awards.



Mark Davidson presented Boneta's Neil Ingram with the Sommelier of the Year Award.



Earls Restaurant's Kayla Fritz (front) and Anik Spiliotakis served up fine Italian wines at Ciao Italia, kicking off the 60-plus events at the 30th annual Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival.